

## **CWD UPDATE**

### **April 17, 2003**

At the recent North American Wildlife and Natural Resources Conference, several non-government organizations agreed to lobby Congress for full funding of the National Plan. Several CWD biologists are working with representatives of the organizations on the strategy to accomplish this as a unified effort. A letter has been drafted and several organizations have signed the letter to be sent to Congress.

Wisconsin DNR has reported an additional 36 deer from the established area have tested positive for CWD. This brings the total number of whitetail deer in Wisconsin testing positive to 130. New helicopter surveys have estimated the total deer population in the zone to be 16,400 to 17,900. To date, 35,196 samples have been tested for about 88% of the total collected.

Dr. Elizabeth Williams of the University of Wyoming has received a \$2,400,000 grant from the Department of Defense to conduct research on how the protein thought to cause CWD is transmitted from animal to animal. Research will also involve trying to develop a technique to detect the agent in the environment as well as in saliva, feces and urine.

Efforts in the Montana legislature to rescind the citizen's ballot initiative that banned hunting behind high wire and future game farms have failed. The last bill that would have required the use of hunting license fees to pay producers for the animals that they lost and to permit the hunting behind high wire was tabled in committee and was not revived by the deadline.

The Maine Department of Inland Fisheries and Wildlife report that all 831 deer submitted to NVSL in Ames, Iowa for CWD testing were negative.

A panel of national wildlife experts will review Wisconsin DNR's efforts to combat CWD. The panel will meet on April 21 to begin its review of the efforts and provide recommendations to the DNR on how to improve its management of CWD.

The Ontario Ministry of Natural Resources tested over 200 deer for CWD during last falls deer season. All results are negative. They are currently developing a CWD contingency and response plan to guide their actions should CWD be found in the Province.

Elk ranchers in Manitoba recently held an illegal sale of animals. Warrants are currently being issued reference this sale. At this sale, 5 bred cows were sold as a group for about \$650 total, or \$130 per cow. Down a lot from previous sales prior to the CWD issue.

The Florida Fish and Wildlife Commission has reported that test results from 483 free-roaming deer failed to find CWD in that state's deer herd.

The Colorado Division of Wildlife has collected 69 deer from open space and private property near Rabbit Mountain, an urban area where feeding deer was common. Of the 69 animals tested, 22 tested positive for a 31.8% infection rate.

The number of documented cases of chronic wasting disease continued to increase in Wyoming in 2002, wildlife researchers say. After analyzing 2,550 samples of dead deer and elk, the Wyoming Game and Fish Department says the disease is now in 23 of the state's 152 deer hunt areas. All are in the southeastern quarter of the state. The disease showed up in five hunt areas where it hadn't been found previously but wasn't detected in four areas where it had been reported. New locations for CWD include near Baggs, Saratoga and the Snowy Range.

USDA-APHIS has made 4 million dollars available to states for CWD efforts. The funding will be made available to states, amounts depending on the status of CWD in that state. Tier one states are those who have confirmed CWD in free-ranging states will share \$1.75 million. Tier two states are those states adjacent to the tier one states and they will divide \$1 million. The remaining states, tier three, will share \$1.25 million. To receive the funds, the states must submit management and surveillance plans detailing how the money will be spent.

The FY 2003 supplemental federal budget provided \$110 million to NVSL in Ames, Iowa for their master plan. This will assist in the upgrade of those laboratories and is part of the estimated \$420 + million needed. The \$110 million is in addition to \$33 million included in the Omnibus appropriations bill.

The Canadian Food Inspection Agency will destroy a second captive cervid herd in Alberta. This is a whitetail deer herd north of Edmonton. Because of privacy laws in Canada, the CFIA is not saying why the herd is being destroyed, however, an official with the agency stated "I can tell you that as a result of analysis of the laboratory results and consideration of the epidemiology which includes linkages with other farms, a decision has been made to eliminate another herd of approximately 95 white tailed deer."

Tests of 670 free-roaming elk in Oregon and of 785 free-roaming elk in Washington have not found CWD in those states. Both agencies plan on continuing to collect animals for testing in the future.